FEBRUARY
2016

Safety Newsletter

Winter Weather Safety

Whether winter brings severe storms, light dustings or just cold temperatures creating a variety of hazards that can significantly impact everyday tasks and activities. These hazards include slippery surfaces, strong winds and environmental cold. Below are a few safety concerns and helpful tips to stay safe when the winter weather hits.

Walking Safely on Snow and Ice

To prevent slips, trips, and falls, clear walking surfaces of snow and ice, and spread deicer, as quickly as possible after a winter storm. Wear proper footwear when walking on snow or ice. A pair of insulated and water resistant boots with good rubber treads is a must for walking during or after a winter storm. Take short steps and walk at a slower pace so you can react quickly to a change in traction, when walking on an icy or snow-covered walkway.

Stranded in a Vehicle

If you are stranded in a vehicle, stay in the vehicle. Call for emergency assistance if needed, response time may be slow in severe winter weather conditions. Do not leave the vehicle to search for assistance unless help is visible within 100 yards. You may become disoriented and get lost in blowing and drifting snow. Display a trouble sign by hanging a brightly colored cloth on the vehicle's radio antenna and raising the hood. Turn on the vehicle's engine for about 10 minutes each hour and run the heat to keep warm. Also, turn on the vehicle's dome light when the vehicle is running as an additional signal. Beware of carbon monoxide poisoning. Keep the exhaust pipe clear of snow, and open a downwind window slightly for ventilation.

Ice Storm Safety

Often in North Carolina, winter storms bring large amounts of ice accumulation. Even a thin coating of ice can result in a travel nightmare, while heavier amounts will severely damage trees and power lines. Strong winds can add extra force to already weighed down tree branches and power lines, increasing the likelihood of significant damage. Follow the steps below to stay safe in an ice storm.

- Avoid driving on icy roads.
- Be sure to charge cell phones and laptops ahead of time. Make sure you have several ways to communicate with others. Consider landline phones, social media, and texting.
- Never play around ice-covered trees; you may be injured if a branch breaks under the weight of the ice and falls. Stay clear of any downed power lines.
- Think about safe alternate power sources you could use if you lose heat, such as a fireplace, wood/coal stove or portable space heaters. However, be sure to exercise caution and follow manufacturer's instructions when using portable space heaters and other devices.
- Never use portable generators, camp stoves and grills inside your home or garage; they should only be used outside. Keep them at least 20 feet away from your home's windows, doors and vents to prevent deadly carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Use flashlights during power outages instead of candles to prevent the risk of fire, and keep plenty of extra batteries on-hand.

**For more Winter Weather Safety Tips visit www.osha.gov/dts/weather/winter_weather/index.html and www.weather.com/safety/winter/ice-storm-damage-impacts-20121123

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Avoid Frostbite & Hypothermia

Two big concerns of working or simply spending time outdoors in cold weather are frostbite and hypothermia. Both can occur at much higher temperatures than many people realize.

Hypothermia

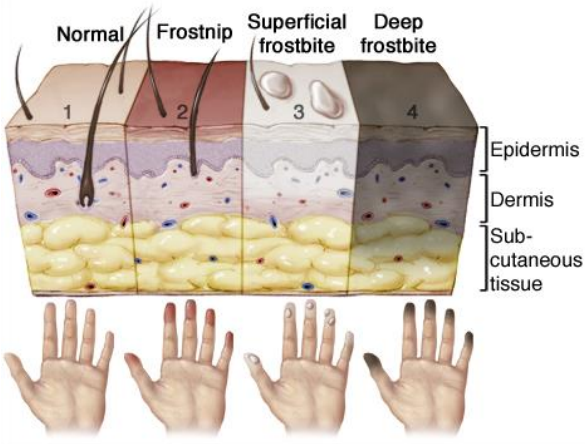
Hypothermia a drop in body temperature to 95 degrees or less can be fatal if not detected promptly and treated properly. When the body temperature drops, the blood vessels near the surface of the body narrow to reduce heat loss. Muscles begin to tighten to make heat. If the body temperature continues to drop, the person will begin to shiver. The shivering continues until the temperature drops to about 90 degrees. Temperatures below 90 degrees create a life-threatening situation.

Signs of hypothermia include forgetfulness, drowsiness, slurred speech, change in appearance (e.g., puffy face), weak pulse, slow heartbeat, and very slow and shallow breathing. If the body temperature drops to or below 86 degrees, a person may slip into a coma or have a death-like appearance.

If you notice these symptoms in a person, take his or her temperature. If it is 95 degrees or below, call a doctor or take the victim directly to a hospital. To prevent further heat loss, wrap the patient in a warm blanket. A hot water bottle or electric heating pad can be applied to the person's stomach. If the victim is alert, give small quantities of warm food or drink.

There are several things you should not do to a hypothermia victim. Do not give alcoholic beverages. Do not give a hot shower or bath, since it could cause shock. Generally, do not try to treat hypothermia at home. The condition should be treated in a hospital.

Frostbite



The parts of the body most affected by frostbite are exposed areas of the face (cheeks, nose, chin, forehead), the ears, wrists, hands and feet. Frostbitten skin is whitish and stiff and feels numb rather than painful. When spending time outdoors during cold weather, be alert for signs of frostbite and, if you notice any, take immediate action.

To treat frostbite, warm the affected part of the body gradually. Wrap the area in blankets, sweaters, coats, etc. If no warm wrappings are available, place frostbitten hands under the armpits or use your body to cover the affected area. Seek medical attention immediately.

Do not rub frostbitten areas; the friction can damage the tissue. Do not apply snow to frostbitten areas. Because its temperature is below freezing, snow will aggravate the condition.

What to Wear to Prevent Hypothermia and Frostbite

Dress in layers of light-weight clothing which keep you warmer than a single layer of heavy clothes. Remove layers as necessary to prevent overheating and perspiring which can lead to chills or hypothermia later. Remember that wet clothing is 20 times less warm than dry clothing. Wear a hat and you'll stay much warmer when working in cold conditions. As much as half your body heat can go up in steam off the top of a bare head. Protect your ears from frostbite as well by wearing a hat that will cover your ears, or use ear muffs. Wear the right gloves for the work you are doing. Gloves should have enough insulation to keep you warm and prevent frostbite, but be thin enough so you can feel what you are doing.

**For more Winter Health information visit
http://www.safetytoolboxtalks.com/Seasonal/winter-health-and-safety-tips.html

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Safety Newsletter

Tips to Beat COLD SEASON

It's Cold Season. While colds are rarely deadly, dealing with the symptoms can set you back in fitness, work, and health. Take these simple precautions to help avoid getting sick.

THREE WORDS OF WISDOM

Activity. Nutrition. Sleep. Repeat!

These three tips are not only critical to performance, they are also important to help prevent catching a cold. Physical activity raises your body's temperature, increases red blood cell production, and strengthens your immune system. Aim for at least 30 minutes of daily exercise.

Eat plenty of fruits and veggies. Poor nutrition hurts your immune system, which lowers your body's natural defenses against viruses and infections. Frozen veggies like spinach, broccoli, and asparagus are easy (and cheap!) to buy. Plus, they contain vitamins that help you ward off colds.

Make the time to get eight hours of sleep to greatly reduce the chances of getting sick.

KEEP IT CLEAN

Always wash your hands with soap, if it's available. You don't know who grabbed the door handle before you. Make sure to scrub under those fingernails.

Avoid touching your eyes, mouth, and face, too. That's how germs get into your body and start causing trouble.

LAYER UP

Respond to the dips and rises in temperature by adjusting to your environment. When it gets cold outside, keep warm by layering. Wear an undershirt to keep your body heat in and definitely wear a jacket. Put on earmuffs (or a beanie, if that's your style) and keep a pair of gloves on you. When it warms up, you can peel off layers to keep from overheating.

DOC, IT STILL GOT ME!

If you do get sick, start chugging clear fluids (think: water, tea, juice). Drink herbal tea to help soothe your throat. If you've got a cough, try a spoonful of honey. Vitamin C in fruits and juices can boost your immune system and prevent your cold from taking a turn for the worse. If your symptoms don't start to improve within a few days, talk to a qualified medical professional.

**Article from: www.guardyourhealth.com

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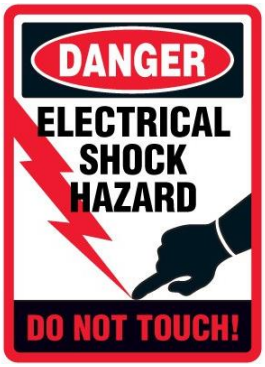
ELECTRICAL SAFETY

The voltage of the electricity and the available electrical current in regular businesses and homes has enough power to cause death by electrocution. Even changing a light bulb without unplugging the lamp can be hazardous because coming in contact with the "hot", "energized" or "live" part of the socket could kill a person. Electrical injuries consist of four main types: electrocution (fatal), electric shock, burns, and falls caused as a result of contact with electrical energy.

U.S. fire departments responded to an estimated annual average of 47,820 reported home structure fires involving electrical failure or malfunction in 2007-2011. These fires resulted in 455 civilian deaths, 1,518 civilian injuries and $1.5 billion in direct property damage. Below are some electrical safety tips for around the house from the National Fire Protection Association.

INDOOR ELECTRIAL SAFETY

- Replace or repair damaged or loose electrical cords.
- Avoid running extension cords across doorways or under carpets.
- In homes with small children, make sure your home has tamper-resistant (TR) receptacles.
- Consider having additional circuits or outlets added by a qualified electrician so you do not have to use extension cords.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for plugging an appliance into a receptacle outlet.
- Avoid overloading outlets. Plug only one high-wattage appliance into each receptacle outlet at a time.
- If outlets or switches feel warm, frequent problems with blowing fuses or tripping circuits, or flickering or dimming lights, call a qualified electrician.
- Place lamps on level surfaces, away from things that can burn and use bulbs that match the lamp's recommended wattage.
- Make sure your home has ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) in the kitchen bathroom(s), laundry, basement, and outdoor areas.
- Arc-fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs) should be installed in your home to protect electrical outlets.



OUTDOOR ELECTRICAL SAFETY

- Have a qualified electrician do all electrical work.
- To prevent an electrical shock, make sure all your outside electrical receptacles are GFCI (ground fault circuit interrupter) protected.
- Ensure lighting and power tools are made for outdoor use.
- Store your electrical tools indoors.
- Keep electric tools away from children.
- Keep the area around your electric meter and other electrical equipment clear.
- Use extension cords that are marked for outdoor use.
- Extension cords are not meant for long-term use.